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# CHOU EN-LAI'S PROPOSAL TO RESUME KOREAN ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

Chou En-lai's statement calling for the resumption of the Korean armistice negotiations is not only conciliatory in tone but departs from the previous Communist demand for total repatriation. His statement admits for the first time that there are two categories of POW's -- those who insist on immediate repatriation and those "remaining prisoners." While Chou blames "UN intimidation" for causing this latter category, he does make a major concession by suggesting the possibility that there are some POW's who are unwilling to be repatriated. This latter category of prisoners would be handed over to a "neutral" state which would ensure the solution of their repatriation.

It is not clear from Chou's statement whether the repatriation agreement is to precede the cease-fire. In this connection, the UN has held that any repatriation agreement must be effected before hostilities are ended. It is also not clear how the screening and classification will take place.

Chou's return from Moscow only five days ago underlines the probability that the move is closely tied to the current Soviet peace offensive. It is possible, in view of the recent influx of new armies in Korea, that the Communists have taken this move to stall off what they believe to be an imminent UN offensive while their armies receive additional training. In any event, the Communists realized that a concession on "total repatriation" was essential in order to resume the Panmunjom discussions, although their purpose in doing so remains unclear.

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